

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 058838 ACTION BANGKOK

23 MARCH

1974. QUOTE:

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SEATO

SUBJECT: HALPERIN STATEMENT BEFORE NIX SUBCOMMITTEE

REF: BANGKOK 4713

1. ON MARCH 20 MORTON HALPERIN APPEARED BEFORE THE NIX SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS WHICH HAS BEEN HOLDING HEARINGS FOR THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS ON ASIAN TREATY COMMITMENTS. HALPERIN CALLED FOR US WITHDRAWAL BOTH FROM SEATO AND THE MANILA PACT ARGUING THAT THE MANILA PACT HAS DIMINISHED INTO JUST A BILATERAL U.S. TREATY COMMITMENT TO THAILAND AND THAT U.S. INTERESTS IN THAILAND WERE INSUFFICIENT TO JUSTIFY AMERICAN MILITARY INTERVENTION UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. PERTINENT QUOTES FROM HIS STATEMENT INCLUDE THE FOLLOW-
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ING (FULL TEXT BEING POUCHED):

-- QUOTE MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF SEATO HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM THE ORGANIZATION WITH VARYING DEGREES OF FORMALITY.... THAT LEAVES THE U.S. AND THAILAND. FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES SEATO IS NOW A BILATERAL SECURITY PACT PROVIDING AN AMERICAN GUARANTEE OF THAI SECURITY AGAINST COMMUNIST INVASION OR SUBVERSION. UNQUOTE.

-- QUOTE PLAINLY THE U.S. HAS A RIGHT TO RECONSIDER ITS COMMITMENTS AS EVERY STATE DOES. 'BETRAYAL' MIGHT OCCUR IF, HAVING NOT RENOUNCED SEATO, WE REFUSED TO RESPOND WHEN THE THAIS CALLED FOR HELP. BUT TO GIVE WARNING NOW THAT THE U.S. WILL AT SOME FUTURE TIME NO LONGER CONSIDER AN ATTACK ON THAILAND AS AN ACTION WHICH NECESSARILY THREATENS AMERICAN SECURITY IS ONLY TO REFLECT THE SENTIMENTS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN DEALINGS WITH FOREIGN LEADERS. UNQUOTE

-- QUOTE NOW IS THE TIME FOR A CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN SECURITY INTERESTS. NOW, WHEN A THREAT TO THAILAND APPEARS REMOTE, IS THE TIME TO DECIDE WHETHER THE U.S. SHOULD MAINTAIN CAPABILITIES IN ITS BASE LINE FORCE STRUCTURE WHOSE PRIMARY JUSTIFICATION IS THEIR POTENTIAL USE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. UNQUOTE

-- QUOTE WE SHOULD ACT NOW SO AS NOT TO BE CONFRONTED LATER WITH THE NEED TO LIVE UP TO AN ANACHRONISTIC COMMITMENT THAT WE FAILED TO TERMINATE IN ORDER TO MAKE CREDIBLE OUR CONTINUING VITAL COMMITMENTS IN WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTHEAST ASIA. UNQUOTE

3. HALPERIN WAS QUESTIONED BY SEVERAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS, WITH CONGRESSMEN HAMILTON AND DUPONT DRAWING ON ASST. SEC. INGERSOLL'S TESTIMONY TO THE SFRC. THEY IMPLICITLY QUESTIONED THE DESIRABILITY OF AN ABRUPT U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA WHICH OUR LEAVING SEATO AND TERMINATING AID TO SVN (AS HALPERIN ALSO ADVOCATED) WOULD REPRESENT.

4. CONGRESSMAN NIX IN OPENING REMARKS CRITICIZED THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND AND ELSEWHERE IN EAST ASIA, CHARACTERIZING THEM AS QUOTE HOSTAGES UNQUOTE, A BOND TO OUR WORD. HE QUESTIONED THE VALUE OF OUR TREATY COMMITMENTS IN ASIA, CLAIMING THEY COULD LEAD TO FURTHER U.S. MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE REGION. MR NIX CHARACTERIZED SEATO AS QUOTE THE MOST WORTHLESS ORGANIZATION UNQUOTE HE HAD SEEN.

5. ASST. SEC. INGERSOLL HAS BEEN ASKED TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON APRIL 3 CONCERNING OUR TREATY COMMITMENTS, TROOP PRESENCE, AND BASES IN ASIA; DOOLIN, DOD/ISA, WILL APPEAR AT SAME TIME. WITNESSES SCHEDULED TO TESTIFY DURING COMING WEEK INCLUDE: CONGRESSMAN DONALD FRASER (D. MINN.), RALPH CLOUGH, DWIGHT PERKINS, AND RICHARD BARNET.

UNQUOTE RUSH

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